



FY 2013 Annual Report

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Mission

The Iowa Department of Human Rights is a state agency with a mission to ensure basic rights, freedoms, and opportunities for all by **empowering underrepresented Iowans and eliminating economic, social, and cultural barriers**. We help individuals attain economic independence by ensuring access to government services and advancing educational achievement and entrepreneurial success consistent with their aspirations.

In pursuit of this mission, we will:

- administer federal programs to help low income families (Community Action Division);
- utilize data to support public safety and to better understand trends in criminal and juvenile justice (Criminal and Juvenile Justice Division)
- assist Iowans of racial/ethnic minority groups, women and those with disabilities in individual and policy advocacy so they will have a fair and legitimate opportunity to obtain and create new jobs at all levels of business including corporate, manufacturing and entrepreneurship (Community Advocacy and Services Division)
- promote positive youth development (PYD) practices throughout Iowa so all youth have positive experiences and opportunities, positive relationships with adults, and safe and supportive environments

Vision

The Iowa Department of Human Rights (DHR) is the **results-oriented leader** in creating a more **inclusive and productive Iowa** where a society of economically independent individuals are engaged citizens, contributing to the improvement of their communities.

Purpose Statement

The Iowa Department of Human Rights will advocate for underrepresented Iowans and foster hope within our communities by educating individuals, businesses and government entities about the needs, rights and responsibilities of all Iowans. As a state agency, we have a special responsibility to ensure accessibility to government in order to improve Iowans' quality of life.

Iowa Code: 216A

Letter from Director Wong:

One agency, built on mutual respect, the Iowa Department of Human Rights (DHR) is the model of culturally affirmative government. Made up of three divisions with one purpose, DHR serves distinct communities of underrepresented Iowans. As we continue to become a more efficient, focused, and results oriented organization, administrative functions have been significantly streamlined and better aligned to pursue an integrated strategy that increases knowledge, understanding and opportunities for our populations.

Our efforts and resources are focused to bring economic independence to underrepresented Iowans through collaborations and partnerships within government and in communities across Iowa. We have a keen recognition that partnerships and leveraging resources is fundamental to our success and we are conscientiously moving towards crossing functional lines. Ever mindful of our responsibility to operate as a state agency that makes prudent, wise and leveraged use of our resources, the priority remains to make a meaningful difference in the lives of people in the areas in which we work.

We put emphasis on ideas that have the power to reshape the way Iowans think about their responsibility to themselves and one another, and the ways academic achievement and civic engagement can empower underrepresented Iowans and encourage youth to think for themselves. In order to maintain DHR as a reliable, relevant and responsive agency, we hold ourselves to high standards of (1) proactive outreach and communication; (2) responsive direct service; and (3) effective grant making.

To meet these goals, we strive to be thoughtful in our communication and action and transparent in our decision making. With no conventional market signals, our pursuit of excellence requires relentless self-examination and conviction to the ever-increasing importance of the department's work. I invite your closer examination of and feedback about the services, impacts, and results achieved through the work of the Department and our many partners.

Executive Summary

The Iowa Department of Human Rights (DHR) is a state agency with a mission to ensure basic rights, freedoms, and opportunities for all by empowering underrepresented Iowans and eliminating economic, social, and cultural barriers. We help individuals attain economic independence by ensuring access to government services and advancing educational achievement and entrepreneurial success consistent with their aspirations.

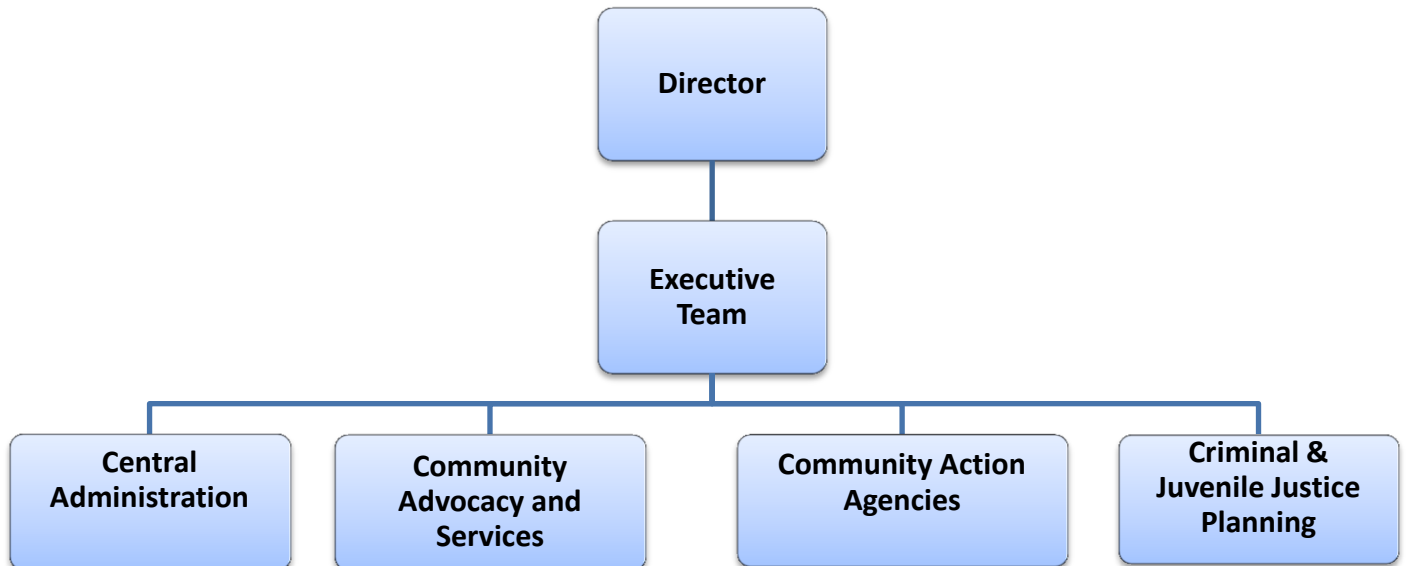
The Department represents Iowa's most vulnerable citizens – families in poverty, persons with disabilities, the deaf and hard of hearing, minorities, and women. While these individuals are often overlooked, the governor's goals cannot be fully achieved while leaving Iowa's underserved populations behind. Minority children are more likely to end up in the justice system for the same offenses committed by their non-minority classmates, having a direct impact on the education system. Under-represented Iowans have a higher instance of poverty, and raising their family incomes 20% would have a disproportionately *positive* impact. Persons with disabilities, deaf Iowans, minorities and women all benefit from a robust workforce. The Governor's Office and the Iowa Legislature are positioned to provide positive change for those who need it most.

The Department strives to be a resource to the governor and to legislators. We are developing an intake tool so that we can better collect and share with you meaningful data about the needs of Iowans looking to us for assistance. We ask policy-makers to look at issues through the lens of an underrepresented Iowan and consider the potential consequences of their proposals. We seek to be a partner that will champion ideas which promise to remove barriers and enable success.

This report will detail DHR's progress in implementing the statutory reorganization of 2010. You will notice a theme as we illustrate how building bridges is improving the critical services we provide to Iowans, ensuring their voices are heard.

Iowa Department of Human Rights

Table of Organization



- Public Information
- Policy Coordination
- Administrative rules coordination
- Fiscal Services
- Budget development and tracking
- Personnel/human resource functions
- Strategic planning
- Liaison to DHR Board

- Advocate for and empower underrepresented Iowans by eliminating barriers
- Develop and facilitate culturally specific training
- Provide information and referral services to citizens, state agencies, and the business community

- State and local grants management
- Training and technical assistance to community organizations
- On-site program monitoring of grantees

- Operate Justice Data Warehouse
- Manage the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Initiative
- Distribute federal juvenile justice funds to local jurisdictions
- Analyze and evaluate justice system operations

Implementing Reorganization

In 2010 DHR streamlined its administrative functions, consolidating from 10 divisions into three – Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP), Community Action Agencies (DCAA) and Community Advocacy and Services (CAS). For years, CAS staff worked in silos serving their particular population, but now that the Department's reorganization is codified, staff continues to build internal bridges. Staff are now working in teams, getting to know the issues in other underrepresented communities. Already we are seeing the benefits of building internal bridges. For instance, offices within CAS are working together to develop a standardized client intake tool. Previously, no two offices were using the same method to monitor the clients and issues being raised to our Department. Development of a standard intake tool will allow staff to better assist one another's clients, it will enable the Department to better illustrate the breadth of services it provides, and the tool will ultimately provide a reliable way to track trends and issues within underrepresented populations.

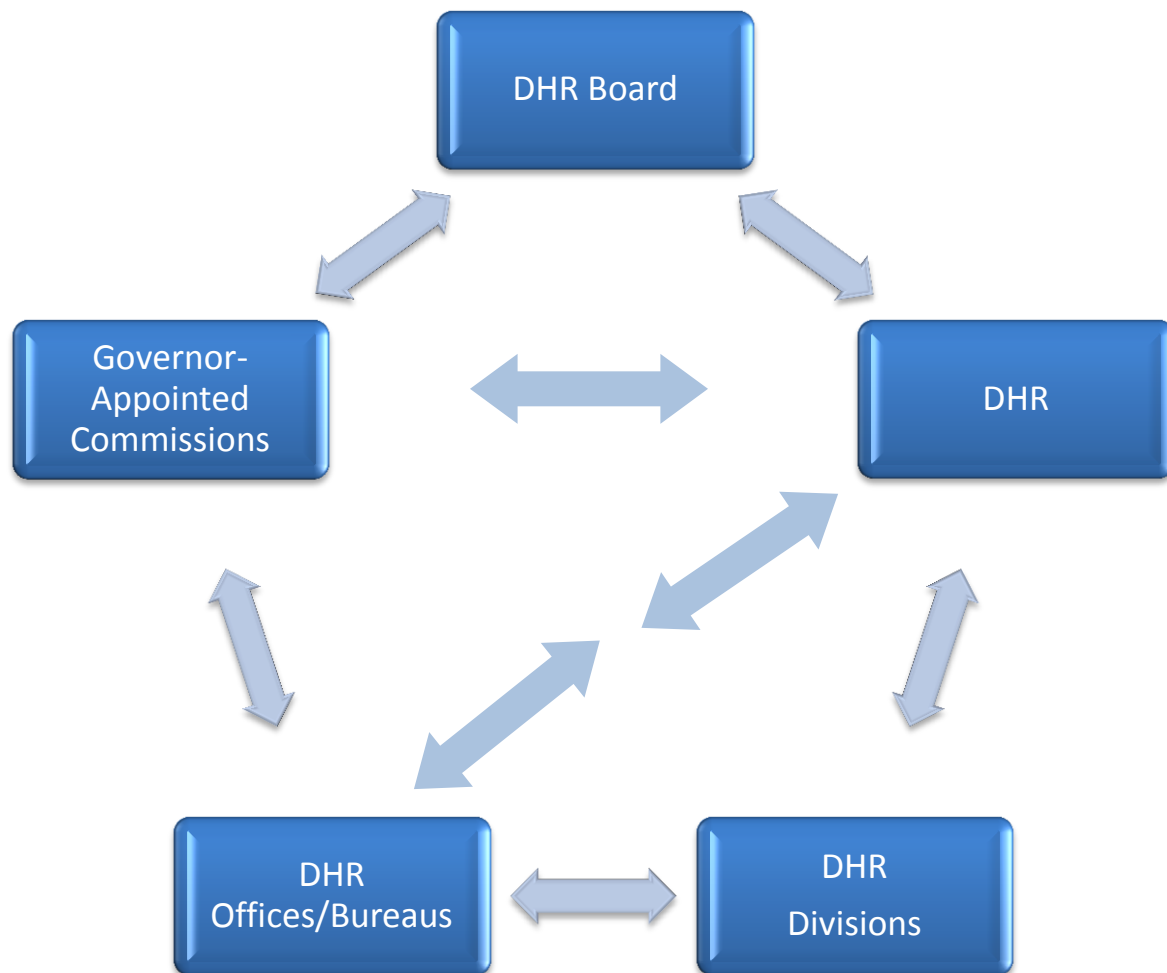
Another key resource just being fully utilized is our statewide network of citizen volunteers. The Department has more than 100 Governor-appointed board and commission members from every geographical region across Iowa. For every one staff person, the Department has more than two commissioners. Though we are a small agency, approximately 10% of all the governor's appointments are made to the DHR board, commissions or councils. As terms expire, the Department is working with the Governor's Office to bring the board and commissions into compliance with gender and political balance.

Our volunteer board and commission members are the eyes and ears of their communities. Especially with decreased staff and resources for travel, the Department is relying on board members and commissioners to bring grassroots-level concerns to the table. Additionally, commissions are also breaking free of their silos, finding areas of common concern and banding together to show support for fellow under-represented Iowans.

One recent example has the potential to keep minority youth from unfairly entering the juvenile justice system. The board and several commissions have voiced support for statewide implementation of a detention screening tool. Staff from the Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning is working with DHR's commissions on the Status of African Americans, Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, Deaf Services, Latino Affairs, Native American Affairs, Persons with Disabilities and the DHR Board to build support for the screening tool.

This tool is documented to reduce the disproportionate number of minority youth entering the justice system in pilot communities of Sioux City, Waterloo and Des Moines. Through cross-division and cross-commission partnership, we are keeping minority youth from entering the justice system and getting them back in school with their peers. A federal grant has just been received that will permit gradual expansion of detention screening from the original three counties statewide through an on-line tool in the Iowa Courts information system. DHR staff is represented on the steering committee established to oversee grant activity.

Internal Communication Chart



Building Bridges

In addition to building internal bridges, we are laying the foundation to build external bridges. Our Department no longer has the capacity to devote as much time to direct client work. However, what we lack in staff resources we want to make up for through strategic partnerships. The Board completed a year-long strategic planning process last December and has made pursuit and support of these partnerships a top priority.

This fall the Department was honored to partner with the Governor's Office, Senator Harkin's office, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Iowa Workforce Development for a roundtable discussion on empowering individuals with disabilities through employment. We realize that by showing a single employer the benefits of a diverse workforce, we can do more to reduce barriers than by assisting a single individual looking for work.

Employment barriers were just one concern that surfaced in outreach meetings sponsored by the Department. DHR staff visited 13 communities during the last year. The Department wanted a deeper understanding of the needs of our targeted populations outside of the Des Moines metro. Facilitating these community conversations not only informed our work moving forward, but also built a communication pipeline to these communities. Even more exciting, these outreach meetings sparked new conversations within communities, bringing new problem-solvers to the table.

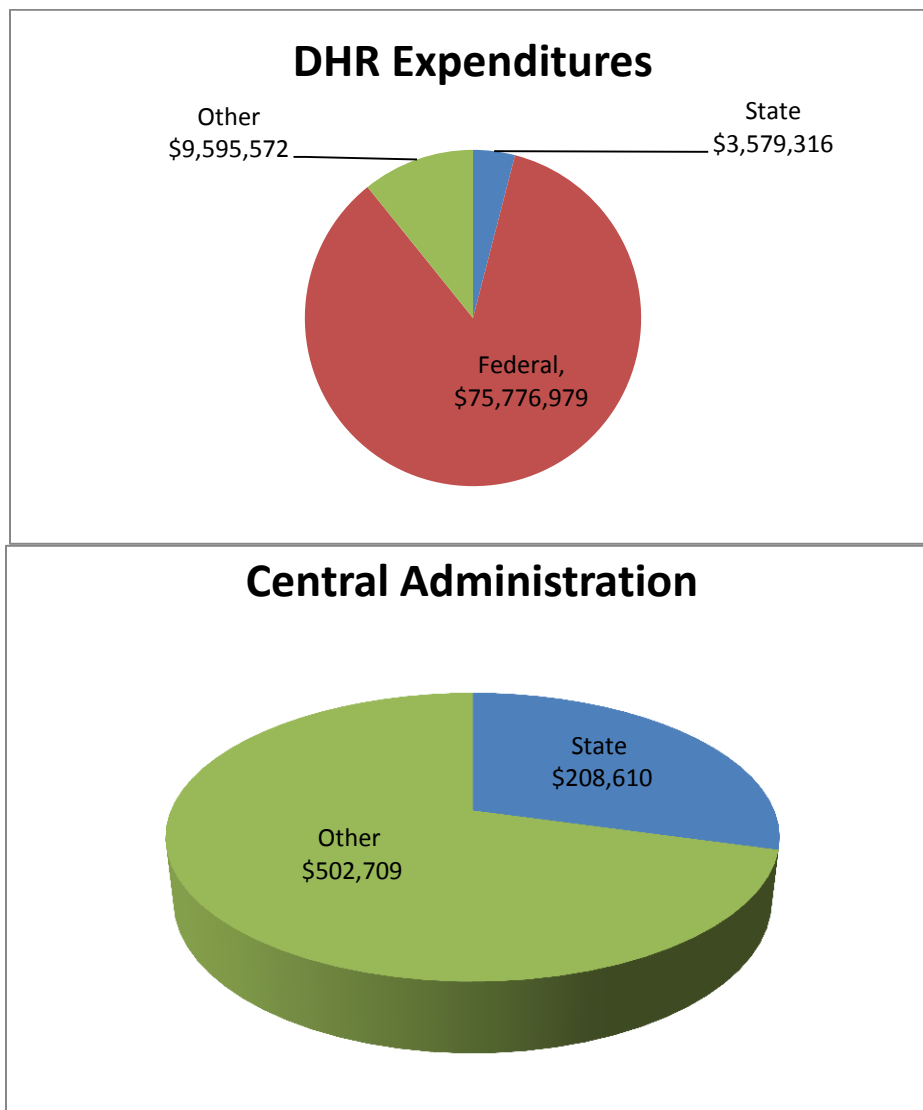
Roadblocks

Despite DHR's progress toward removing barriers for underrepresented Iowans at the systemic level, we do face significant roadblocks. The greatest of these is layoffs. Ninety-eight percent of our state appropriation goes to fixed costs – namely salaries and benefits. We have absorbed mandatory salary increases and other cost increases in recent years through vacancies, but entering FY15 we will face staff reductions. The Department reduced staff in 2011 and there is no excess left to cut away and we will no longer be able to fulfill some of our statutory obligations. We are at a critical junction where losing staff will mean a loss in service to Iowans. This is especially worrisome for clients such as deaf Iowans and persons with disabilities. Our staff has an incredible level of institutional knowledge about individuals' rights, and we are where clients turn when they are in danger of falling through the cracks. For example, we inform them of their rights to American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters when they're hospitalized, or their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

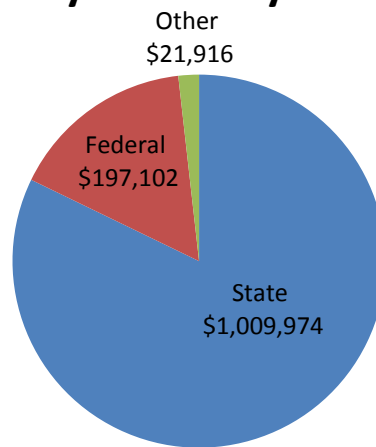
What's Next

DHR staff hosted an open house with the theme “growing opportunities.” We’re exploring new opportunities to work with other agencies toward a goal of removing barriers; opportunities to educate employers, legislators and policy makers about the unintended consequences of their decisions; opportunities to empower underrepresented lowans to become self-advocates. Over the past year we have better-identified the needs of underrepresented lowans. Now we’re forging ahead, looking for partners and solutions that can deliver measureable results.

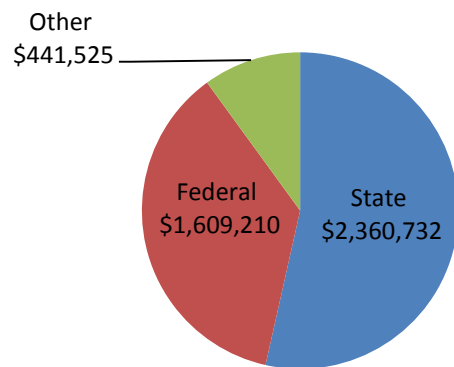
Expenditures SFY13



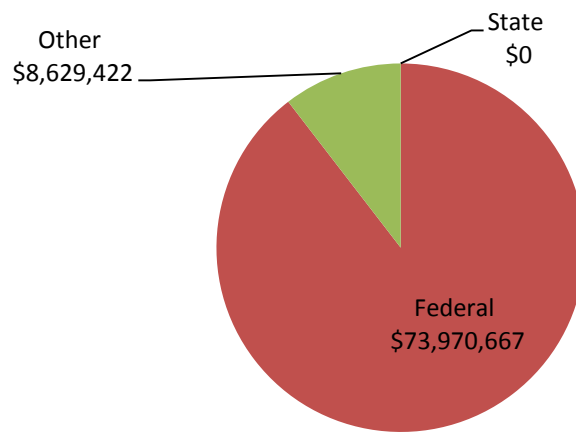
Community Advocacy and Services



Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning



Community Action Agencies



Expenditures By Source

	State	Federal	Other
<u>Criminal and Juvenile Justice Division</u>			
Criminal and Juvenile Justice Approp.	\$1,100,731	\$ -	\$ 123,966
Juvenile District Transfers		46,000	238,058
NCPC Embedding Prevention			4,362
Family Drug Court (PACT)			21,327
Iowa Statistical Analysis Center		111,531	
Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative			19,362
NDEX Implementation		42,000	
Rural Homeless Youth		213,147	
Mental Health and Juvenile Justice Collaboration Proj.		68,867	
Residential Substance Abuse Treatment		11,090	
Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws		174,818	
Juvenile and Family Assistance Stabilization Track (J-FAST)		126,145	
Project Safe Neighborhoods			7,463
Co-Occurring Treatment and Reentry		9,518	
Juvenile Justice Reform Project		46,754	
Rapsheet		11,259	
Uniform Crime Report			12,294
TraCS			8,106
Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Data Request			217
Juvenile Accountability Block Grant		366,766	
Title V Community Grant Fund		59,850	
Juvenile Justice Action Grants		303,109	
Juvenile Justice Advisory Council		18,356	
Criminal Juvenile Justice Information System/JDW	1,260,001		
Drug Court Statewide Enhancement			6,370
Second Chance-DOC			-
SUBTOTAL	\$2,360,732	\$1,609,210	\$441,525
<u>Community Action Agencies</u>			
Dept. of Energy Weatherization		5,630,101	
Black Hills Utility			619,454
IP&I Utility			2,484,375
Mid American Energy Utility			2,957,877

Energy Assistance - LIHEAP		49,019,838	
Home Energy Assistance Program		9,653,447	
Individual Development Accounts			62,702
Community Services Block Grant		6,726,613	
Family Development and Self Sufficiency (FaDSS)		2,940,668	2,505,014
SUBTOTAL	\$ -	\$73,970,667	\$8,629,422
<u>Community Advocacy and Services</u>			
Community Advocacy and Services Appropriation	\$931,948		\$21,916
College Leadership	11,366	11,337	-
Youth Leadership	46,443	46,116	-
Client Assistance Program		94,508	
Task force for Young Women (transferred to CJPJ)		45,141	
Training and Technology	20,217		
SUBTOTAL	\$1,009,974	\$197,102	\$21,916
<u>Central Administration</u>			
Central Administration Appropriation	\$208,610	\$ -	\$502,709
Department Totals	\$3,579,316	\$75,776,979	\$9,595,572

Divisions in Depth

Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning

The location of the Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) in the Iowa Department of Human Rights ensures its independence from operational agencies in conducting research, planning, data coordination, and information clearinghouse functions.

The Administrator of CJJP reports administratively to the Director of the Department of Human Rights, but on policy issues is also responsible to two statutory councils, the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning Advisory Council and the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council. To facilitate CJJP's receiving otherwise confidential data from state and local agencies, specific statutory language exists to ensure CJJP access to relevant justice system information. This access has given CJJP a unique capability to provide data and information system-related assistance across agencies and to study and report on Iowa's multi-faceted justice system from a neutral, objective position in state government.

CJJP also provides staff support to three other entities. Legislation passed in 2010 established the Public Safety Advisory Board to provide assistance to the legislative, executive, and judicial branches in developing sound criminal justice policy and legislation. The Sex Offender Research Council provides input to the executive and legislative branches on matters relating to sex offenses and offenders. Finally, the CJIS Advisory Board provides guidance to the Division's CJIS project (discussed below).

Current Staffing

The CJJP staff currently consists of fifteen full-time staff; one additional full-time staff has chosen to work part-time. Staff includes executive officers, information technology specialists, justice system analysts, juvenile justice program planners, a statistical research analyst, an accountant, and one secretary. In FY12, about 66% of CJJP staff salaries and benefits were provided by State funds (including contracts with other state agencies for specific services).

Activities

CJJP activities fall into three general areas:

1. Justice system research and analysis, including:

- Management of the Justice Data Warehouse (JDW), which permits analysis of justice system activity and the preparation of Legislative Impact Statements on proposed justice system legislation.
- District Court disposition and sentencing data collection and reporting.
- Statutory development and revision of multi-year criminal and juvenile justice plans.

- The provision of staff support for the Public Safety Advisory Board and Sex Offender Research Council.
- Research into recidivism of offenders participating in correctional programming.
- Research on correctional trends and developments and changing sentencing policies, such research to include the upgrading and application of prison population projection protocols.
- The development and support of a World Wide Web page to support CJJP's technical assistance and information dissemination functions.
- Provision of various types of assistance to the Iowa Department of Public Safety (DPS) in its efforts to improve Iowa's automated computerized criminal history records through its role as the state's administrator of NCHIP funds.
- Provision of assistance to the Department of Public Safety in completing the annual Uniform Crime Report.
- Provision of a clearinghouse for justice system information (special reports, ongoing responses to requests from other units of government and the general public, etc.).

2. Juvenile justice research, program analysis, and fund pass-through:

- The provision of staff support to the Implementation Committee overseeing achievement of the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Youth Race and Detention, an effort to reduce racial disparity in Iowa's juvenile detention facilities.
- Development and testing of juvenile justice program monitoring and outcome measurement protocols, including the provision of assistance to system officials as they implement risk assessment tools and outcome identification and tracking procedures.
- Provision of staff support to Iowa's State Advisory Group (the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council) established pursuant to the federal JJDP Act, and the administration of the federal juvenile justice formula grant available to states through this federal act.
- Providing monitoring activities in support of the federal JJDP Act (e.g., inspection of local jails and juvenile detention centers).
- Coordination of the Annie E. Casey Foundation Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) in Iowa.
- Providing staff support for the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) and the State Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC).
- Providing various regular reports to Juvenile Court Services offices. Some of these ongoing reports include monthly case management reports, risk assessment information, placement and services reports, and a variety of others. The use of the Justice Data Warehouse (JDW) continues to grow along with the number of reports and analysis.
- Preparation of a report dealing with "crossover" youth (those that are both in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems). The report is currently being

tested in the third judicial district, and will expand to other judicial districts in 2013.

- Provision of evaluation services for the state Family Drug Court grant. CJJP staff remain active members of the Children's Justice Data Committee and assist with reporting needs related to that population of youth.
- Funding and coordination of a validation of the Iowa Delinquency Assessment (IDA), with a draft report expected in early 2013.
- Participating in efforts to control under-age drinking in Iowa.

3. Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS):

CJIS is a statewide integrated criminal justice information system that has enabled automated sharing of information in a common format between state, local, and federal criminal justice agencies, including the Departments of Corrections, Human Rights, Transportation, Public Safety, and Natural Resources, the Judicial Branch, the Attorney General's Office, County Attorneys, Sheriffs' Offices, and local law enforcement. CJIS will eventually link electronically all the justice system agencies in Iowa, speeding the flow and accuracy of information, eliminating duplicate data entry, increasing system efficiency, and enhancing public safety and the safety of Iowa's law enforcement officers. At this writing, approximately 130 justice system agencies are participating in information exchanges, and over 350,000 citations are processed through CJIS annually. Messages relating to Hearing Orders are running in excess of 500,000 per year. Messages between the Departments of Public Safety and Corrections are exceeding 1,000,000 per year. In addition, some exchanges (e.g., sex offender movement and victim notification of protective orders) are operational statewide.

The benefits of the CJIS include the elimination of information errors and redundant data entry. This provides for more complete, accurate, and real-time data to members of the criminal justice community, including improved decision-making, operational efficiency, and an enhanced ability to evaluate the effectiveness of programs. In addition, all agencies that receive data electronically realize a savings in staff time.

Achievements in SFY 2013

- Continued testing and validation of a juvenile detention screening tool in three counties; submitted grant application to permit expansion of juvenile detention screening statewide.
- Continued to work with the juvenile courts to maintain reduced use of juvenile detention (while ensuring public safety);

- Continued data collection from several metropolitan school districts to assist in developing local policies to assist in reducing referrals from schools to law enforcement and the juvenile court;
- Completed and released the following reports:
 - Iowa Residential Facilities Placement– Examination of the Risk Principle;
 - January 15th, 2013 Task Force Report to the Iowa General Assembly
 - Outcome Evaluation of the Moderate Intensity Family Violence Prevention Program (MIFVPP)
 - Comprehensive Jail Diversion Program-Mental Health Courts Study
 - Annual Public Safety Advisory Board Report to the Legislature;
 - Annual Legislation Monitoring Report to the General Assembly.
 - [2012-2013 Juvenile Court Liaison Report](#)
 - Local Discussions Related to Disproportionate Minority Contact – Black Hawk County
 - Local Discussions Related to Disproportionate Minority Contact – Johnson County
 - Local Discussions Related to Disproportionate Minority Contact – Polk County
 - Local Discussions Related to Disproportionate Minority Contact – Woodbury County
- Under an MOU with the Department of Public Safety, completed the analytic portion of the 2010 Uniform Crime Report;
- Added 12 additional agencies to the CJIS network and implemented a number of new exchanges;
- Completed correctional impact statements on 43 pieces of proposed legislation;
- Installed new JDW Portal updates, the tool utilized to access reports. Little change was seen by the end users in terms of look and feel, but the benefits to CJJP are significant both in cost and functionality;
- Worked with the Department of Corrections to improve existing statistical reports and hasten monthly uploads. Various support tables were also updated. With changes to the Courts data, a number of DOC scripts had to be re-written to include the new tables for DOC reports that rely on Court information;
- Completed a link between the Courts data and DOT crash data, permitting a partnership with the University of Iowa to use the integrated data as part of a new (FY14) grant from the Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau;
- Partnered with research groups to expand use of JDW data, completing 4-6 data exchanges/transfers during FY13, with some continuing into FY14;
- With the Department of Revenue, procured a new Teradata server. This update has shown significant benefits in both query run-time and monthly processing.

Division of Community Advocacy and Services

The Division of Community Advocacy and Services (CAS) streamlines access to services offered by the State of Iowa for underserved populations. According to Iowa code, each of these populations have an office within the CAS division: deaf and hard of hearing, persons with disabilities, African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, Latinos, Native Americans and women. The division is the vital connection between Iowa's diverse communities and the programs, events and information that can provide understanding and equity. CAS partners with public and private agencies, institutions and groups to enable more people to participate fully and make living in Iowa a richer experience.

Current Staffing

In addition to the division administrator, CAS has 10 authorized FTEs including three executive officers, two program planners, four disability consultants and a secretary. Executive officers, program planners and disability consultants work in teams across offices, expanding our internal knowledge base and ability to assist constituents.

Major Accomplishment

In FY 2013, the Iowa Department of Human Rights conducted a major outreach project across the state. Led by CAS Administrator Heidi Smith, staff organized meetings in 13 communities across Iowa including Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, Fort Dodge, Iowa Falls, Sioux City, Muscatine, Dubuque, Mount Pleasant, Oskaloosa, Creston, Winterset, Storm Lake, and Denison.

The purposes of the meetings were:

- for DHR to learn about the issues facing communities.
- to use the information learned to help prioritize and guide the work of our department.
- to identify and document issues and trends across the state. (These findings were captured in a final report.)
- to assist in educating legislators, other state agencies, and stakeholders about the issues.
- to provide an opportunity for community members to learn about the issues and each other, as well.

The following guiding questions were asked at each meeting:

1. What barriers does the identified community have to access healthcare?
2. What specific issues do students face that peripherally create barriers to success in school?
3. What social supports are lacking in the community?
4. What are the barriers to successful meaningful employment?
5. What is working in this community?

Key leaders from each community were invited to participate in the outreach meetings, as well as state and federal legislators. DHR board members and commissioners were involved to help secure participation from members of their communities as well as participate in the meetings themselves in order to gain insight into the barriers within their own communities.

The results of these meetings have been compiled into 13 separate community reports and one statewide report. The overall issues that were identified were language barriers and a lack of regular and reliable transportation. Both of these barriers impacted all four areas of life discussed at each meeting: access to healthcare, education, employment, and social supports. These findings reinforce concerns the department is addressing with constituents such as the need for additional interpreters in education, including American Sign Language (ASL) and cultural languages. While transportation is a common concern, it was determined that the uniqueness of barriers and resources in individual communities meant the solutions are best addressed at the local level. Therefore, the department will share with local communities the information we learned about what is working in some locations.

Constituent Services

In addition to the outreach meetings, the Community Advocacy and Services (CAS) Division has been supporting its constituents through information and referrals. In FY 2013, the CAS Division responded to 2,326 constituent calls and walk-ins. Some examples of issues that the CAS Division offices helped with include constituent statistics, barriers to health care related to language, employment and housing discrimination referrals, immigration paper issues, ADA education and service dog questions.

All seven constituent groups served by CAS are unique, and complexities within each community group pose a constant challenge. Staff spends considerable time becoming experts and maintaining expertise on constantly-changing community groups. Staff does this by attending conferences, serving on task forces, meeting with local service providers and speaking directly with constituents.

One example of a complex community group is Iowa's Asian population, which is very different now than it was 15 years ago. Although CAS does not specifically have a focus on refugees, many of Iowa's Asian residents are recent immigrants and refugees struggling with the most basic human needs. While we do not provide direct service to each of these individuals, we can use our statewide influence to bridge the community and service providers so that these refugees, for example, can receive support at the local level. Due to these partnerships, the United Way has now added ESL classes to help specific Asian populations learn English.

The process to assess the needs of our populations is ongoing.

Education and Events

The Iowa Department of Human Rights, including the CAS Division, is not an enforcement agency. Instead, we build bridges by educating stakeholders and coordinating events to raise awareness regarding human rights issues. The annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration is one example of an event that reminds Iowans about Iowa's human rights legacy while also shining a light on areas that need improvement. Other events such as the Capitol Girls day expose a new generation of leaders to state government. Each year, in partnership with the Girl Scouts, young women come to Des Moines and spend a day with women legislators. This program as well as our other youth initiatives encourage underrepresented youth to think of themselves as leaders and problem solvers. We believe that having people with more diverse experiences at the table leads to better and more inclusive decision-making.

Educating stakeholders is another critical component of our work. Decision-makers sometimes enact policies that have unintended consequences for underrepresented Iowans. Often times, those negative consequences are not the result of malice but rather a lack of education. By educating others about the needs and barriers underrepresented Iowans face, those people are enabled to make more-informed decisions in the future.

Division of Community Action Agencies

The Division of Community Action Agencies (DCAA) is responsible for the administration of federal and state programs operated through a statewide network of community action agencies and other community-based organizations designed to foster self-sufficiency of Iowa's low-income citizens.

The Division works together with the nine-member DCAA Commission appointed by the governor. The Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) program is governed by the FaDSS Council, as designated by Iowa Code. Both the Commission and Council include public and private sector members, including consumers, that help set agency direction.

The Division's guiding principles include: Customer Focus, Results Orientation, Accountability, Collaboration, Empowerment, Data-based Decisions, and Strength-based Focus.

The Bureau of Community Services administers three key self-sufficiency programs: the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Grant program (FaDSS), and the Individual Development Accounts program.

The federal CSBG provides support for Iowa's 18 community action agencies to create, coordinate, and deliver a wide variety of programs and services to low-income Iowans, including health, education, housing, employment, nutrition, emergency services, community linkages, and other self-sufficiency efforts. These are locally-governed, locally-driven initiatives.

In FFY 2012, Iowa's community action agencies served 128,913 families and 333,016 individuals. Local agencies attracted more than 21,000 volunteers who contributed more than 439,000 volunteer hours to their communities during the year. Agencies in Iowa partnered with 3,963 other community organizations, including education, business, non-profit, and faith-based, to provide an array of programs and services to low-income Iowans.

The Bureau administers the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) program that serves Iowa families that are receiving FIP and at risk of long-term economic and family instability. This evidence-based model provided comprehensive services through certified Family Development Specialists to 3,198 Iowa families and 5,446 children last year.

Results show that FaDSS families make substantial progress in a variety of self-sufficiency measures such as increased wages, education, job training, housing, and mental health counseling, and stay off welfare longer than non-FaDSS families.

In FY13, families exiting the FaDSS program increased their average monthly income from wages by over 320%, from \$96 to \$403. Families exiting FaDSS decreased their average monthly Family Investment Program (FIP) amount by 62%, from \$377 to \$142 per month. This results in approximately \$434,515 in monthly savings to FIP.

Achievement of education goals is a key component to increasing long-term family income. In FY13, 342 FaDSS families achieved a major education goal. Of those families, 164 earned a GED/HS Diploma, 107 completed a Certification Program, 60 earned an Associate Degree, and 11 earned a Bachelor's Degree.

[For the complete FaDSS Annual Report, go to *www.iowafadss.org/*](http://www.iowafadss.org/)

The Individual Development Accounts (IDA) program was established in 2009 to encourage low-income working Iowans to establish savings accounts for long-term asset development that lead to family self-sufficiency. Participants can qualify for up to \$2,000 in state matching funds to pay for higher education or job training costs, purchase a home, start a small business, pay for emergency medical costs, pay for an automobile, or purchase assistive technology for a family member with a disability. Savers also participate in financial education courses and asset-specific education.

The IDA program is operated under a contract with the Iowa Credit Union Foundation, which was awarded the grant through an RFP process.

As of January, 2013, the IDA program had achieved the following results:

102 total assets purchases, 51 with state funds:

- Home – 37 (19 with state funds)
- Education - 17 (9 with state funds)
- Vehicle - 28 (11 with state funds)
- Small business - 12 (4 with state funds)
- Assistive Technology- 3 (3 with state funds)
- Rebuild Iowa – 5 (5 with state funds)

The Bureau of Energy Assistance administers the federally funded Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is designed to assist qualifying low-income households in the payment of a portion of their winter heating costs, and to encourage energy conservation through client education and weatherization.

The program utilized \$51.2 million in federal funds to provide assistance to 85,777 Iowa households in FY13, providing an average one-time benefit of \$460 per household. Nearly 30% of all households served had an elderly resident, and more than 48% had a member with a disability. Over 94% of LIHEAP recipients are NOT receiving TANF benefits. Benefits are weighted to targeted households, including the elderly, disabled, working poor and households with children under six years of age.

LIHEAP has two additional components: Assessment and Resolution and Emergency Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP). The Assessment and Resolution component includes energy conservation education, referral to outside services, budget counseling, and vendor negotiation. The ECIP component provides immediate assistance to alleviate life-threatening situations, including repair of a furnace or heating system, obtaining temporary shelter, purchase of blankets and/or heaters, and emergency fuel deliveries.

The Bureau of Weatherization administers the federal Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), the nation's largest residential energy efficiency program. The program reduces energy costs for low-income persons, particularly the elderly, disabled, and families with children by improving the energy efficiency of their homes and ensuring their health and safety. Approximately 34% of the households served included at least one elderly person, 32% included at least one person with a disability and 22% included young children.

The Weatherization Program served 2,230 households in PY12, providing an estimated average \$340 in annual savings per home. The program also conducts a health and safety check on every home weatherized, including inspection of all combustion appliances, possible health and safety problems such as mold and unsafe electrical wiring, and carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. Health and safety risks are mitigated in over 50% of homes.

Programs administered by DCAA are done so at some of the lowest administrative costs for these programs of any state in the country, ranging between 0% - 5%. Lower administrative costs mean more resources available to serve families and support community efforts.

Other Community Coordination Efforts

The DCAA partnered with the Iowa Community Action Association (ICAA) and the National Association of State Community Services Programs to develop and implement a comprehensive board governance training for community action agencies in Iowa. This effort is designed to improve the skills and knowledge of board members of local non-profit organizations that will result in more effective and accountable organizations.

Training to local boards is now offered through ICAA and technical assistance provided by DCAA on an ongoing basis.

DCAA staff is serving on the national Center of Excellence for Organizational Performance Standards to develop comprehensive new organizational “standards of excellence” for the Community Services Block Grant. The standards will be applied to state CSBG offices and local community action agencies. Categories for standards include fiscal operations, human resources, board governance, organizational leadership, community engagement, consumer input, customer satisfaction, strategic planning, and data analysis. The U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services will finalize the standards and determine implementation requirements and timelines.

DCAA is working collaboratively with the Iowa Community Action Association and local agencies in Iowa to begin planning agency needs assessments and joint training and technical assistance strategies to assist local agencies in meeting new organizational performance standards.